



**CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**  
**Fire Prevention Bureau**

Code/Procedural Interpretation

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**CFD Interpretation:** Non-required Fire and Life-Safety Systems

**Date:** August 24, 2016

**Code Reference:** North Carolina Fire Code, Section 901.4.2

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**Subject:**

Does a fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system that is installed either voluntarily or as a “partial system” have to meet the minimum applicable provisions of the North Carolina Fire Code (NCFC) and applicable NFPA standards?

**Interpretation:**

This is a debate that has been going on for years between AHJ's, fire protection installers, and building owners. Section 901.4.2 of the NCFC states:

*“Any fire protection system or portion thereof not required by this code or the International Building Code shall be allowed to be furnished for partial or complete protection provided such installed system meets the requirements of this code and the International Building Code”.*

It is the opinion of this office that the approval of a fire alarm or fire protection system, whether complete or partial, that does not meet the basic minimum standards of the applicable codes and NFPA standards places both the AHJ, as well as the installer, at risk of future litigation should a fire or emergency occur and the system(s) do not function properly. For this reason, any non-required or partial system must be installed per the applicable provisions of the NCFC and NFPA standards.

For a “partial system” to be approved, it must be installed to provide complete coverage in that area of the building bounded by walls and ceilings. Partial systems in open areas with no separation between other building areas are prohibited.